

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LONDON 18076 241921Z

65

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 ACDA-05 OMB-01

TRSE-00 SIL-01 LAB-04 EB-07 /077 W

----- 010177

R 241907Z NOV 75

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6841

SECDEF

C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 18076

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MCAP, UK

SUBJ: POSSIBLE UK DEFENSE CUTS

1. UNDER A MAJOR HEADLINE BANNER THE DAILY TELEGRAPH OF NOVEMBER 24 BOLDLY ASSERTS THAT "MORE CUTS IN DEFENSE OF BETWEEN 600 AND 800 MILLION POUNDS HAVE BEEN ORDERED BY THE CABINET IN THE HOPE OF MAKING REDUCTIONS IN SOCIAL SERVICES SPENDING MORE PALATABLE TO LABOUR MPS". TEXT OF THE ARTICLE BEING SENT UNDER SEPARATE COVER.

2. COMMENT: THE MOD IS PREPARING THE NEW DEFENSE WHITE PAPER DUE TO BE PUBLISHED NEXT FEBRUARY, AND UNDOUBTEDLY SOME DEFENSE CUTS ARE IN THE OFFING. WE WILL SEEK SUCH DETAILS AS MAY BE AVAILABLE NOW AS TO WHERE THE BUDGETARY AXE IS LIKELY TO FALL. AT PRESENT WE DETECT A SENSE OF GUARDED OPTIMISM IN WHITEHALL THAT THE CABINET WILL FEND OFF FURTHER MAJOR CUTS ALTHOUGH THE DEFENSE BUDGET CAN NOT ESCAPE SYMBOLIC REDUCTIONS IN THE LIGHT OF THE MOUNTING CONFRONTATION THE LEFT-WING OF THE LABOR PARTY PLANS ON OVERALL GOVERNMENT ECONOMIC POLICY.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY BUDGET, PRESS COMMENTS, MILITARY CAPABILITIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 24 NOV 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: greeneet
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975LONDON18076
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750409-0406
From: LONDON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19751116/aaaaants.tel
Line Count: 51
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 1
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: greeneet
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 01 JUL 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <01 JUL 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <06 NOV 2003 by greeneet>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: POSSIBLE UK DEFENSE CUTS
TAGS: MCAP, UK
To: STATE DOD
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006